DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 991 SO 022 800

AUTHOR Thompson, Bernida
TITLE Motivating African American Middle School Boys toward Excellence through High Interest and Activity Africentric Lessons.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 59p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Adolescents; *African Studies; *Black Students; Elementary School Students; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Junior High School Students; Learning Activities; *Males; *Middle Schools; *Student Motivation; Teaching Experience; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *African Americans; Afrocentrism; Middle School Students

ABSTRACT

This practicum was an 8-month project designed to improve the motivational level and academic success of African American middle school boys through high-interest and activity-based Africentric lessons. The goal was to motivate black middle school males to strive for academic excellence. This goal was necessary in order to eliminate the problem of nonchalant attitudes toward school due to culturally and historically biased curriculum and exclusion of learning styles and interests. Eight months of lessons comprised of high-interest and high-energy level activities were geared to motivating African American middle school males to strive toward academic excellence. A male rites of passage club was implemented. Observation data of the students' attitude and academic performance were collected, recorded, and charted monthly. The results of the practicum were positive. The goal and objectives were successfully reached and surpassed. In addition, two funding sources offered supplemental funding for the project for the 1991-92 and 1992-93 school years. (DB)

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Motivating African American Middle School Boys Toward Excellence Through High Interest And Activity Africentric Lessons

by

Bernida Thompson

Cluster 36

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

So 022 800

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Bernida L. Thompson under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved

12 October 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Wong Bouverat
Roberta Wong Bouverat, Ph.D., Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer would like to give thanks, first, to the Divine Mother God of the universe for inspiration, physical, and mental endurance needed to successfully complete this practicum. Praises, too, to the ancestors for the foundation laid, as well as the struggles and sacrifices they made. Secondly, the writer thanks Nova University, Dr. Mary Ellen Sapp, Dr. Howard Hunt, and Dr. Roberta Wong Bouverat for patiently teaching the format for the expression of this knowledge. Special thanks goes to Michelle Sweeny, Kathy Ferguson, Jesse Sharpe, Thomas Dyson, and the staff and parents at the school for their support and enthusiastic participation. The writer is indebted to Kamau Robinson for sharing his class with the writer and affording the writer an opportunity to work closely with him on this project. Thanks also goes to Rolando Amerson for taking the boys and allowing the writer study time.

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Abstract

Motivating African American Middle School Boys Toward Excellence Through High Interest and Activity Africentric Lessons. Thompson, Bernida L., 1992: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: African American Middle School Males/ Academic Excellence in Black Adolescent Males/ Middle School Curriculum/ Africentric Curriculum/ Afrocentric Curriculum/ Motivating Adolescents/ Motivating Black Boys/ All Male Classrooms/ Black Learning Styles/ Activity Based Curriculum/ Rites of Passage for Black Adolescents.

This practicum was an eight month project designed to improve the motivational level and academic success of African American middle school boys through high interest and activity Africentric lessons. The goal was to motivate African American middle school males to strive for academic excellence. This was to eliminate the problem of nonchalant attitude toward school due to the culturally and historically biased curriculum and exclusion of learning styles and interests.

The writer developed eight months of lessons comprised of high interest and energy level activities geared to motivating African American middle school males to strive toward academic excellence. The writer also implemented a male rites of passage club. Observation data of the students' attitude and academic performance was collected, recorded, and charted monthly.

The results of this practicum were positive. The goal and objectives were successfully reached and even surpassed. In addition, two funding sources were impressed to the point of offering funding to supplement the project both for the 1991-2 and the 1992-3 school years.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting for this practicum was located in a metropolitan area of the eastern United States. The city and its officials are predominantly African American. The purse strings, however, and true economic and political power are held by America's ruling class. The majority of school materials and texts are commercially prepared by major publishing companies. They are purchased for use in the community's public and private schools.

This practicum was to be conducted in an independent, private, Africentric school. All of the students and staff are African American. Only periodically do racially mixed couples enroll their children. The parent clientele is usually of African descent. The school serves 100 children from the age of 2 1/2 years old through 14 year old eighth graders. The population is broken down into 51 preschoolers, 45 primary graders, and 17 middle schoolers.

The middle school spans grade 5 through 8. Thirteen of the 17 middle schoolers are boys. The middle schoolers comprise one multi-level class taught by an experienced, African American male teacher who has been teaching at the school since January, 1985.

There is a staff of 11 which includes teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators who are cooperatively

responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum for the school. All of the staff are committed, competent, and take their job as a serious mission. Three teachers, including the writer, have been with the school since its inception in 1977. The parents, students, and staff are highly cooperative with one another.

The families are composed of a mixed socio-economic group. There are two parent families and single parent families. There are grandparent guardians, aunt and/or uncle guardians, adopted and foster parent families. There are both white collar and blue collar workers. There are also college students and employment trainees who compose the parent clientele of the school.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is the co-founder, president of the board, teacher, and administrator. The other co-founder is no longer with the school. There are two additional board members. All three board members are female teachers. There is one other administrator along with the writer. The other administrator is also female.

The writer has a multi-faceted role at the school. She is responsible for financial management, curriculum planning, staff development, student success, and well-being. The writer has an accountant to handle tax filing and monthly reports. The writer handles bills payable and delegates the income receivable responsibility to the

other administrator. The writer spent 10 years prior to opening the school developing a curriculum guide with behavioral objectives tailored to children of African descent. Ultimately, the writer hopes to prepare students for mastering the art of taking standardized tests, for achieving a successful high school experience, and for dealing effectively with racism and its negative by-products. The writer allots seven days per year as staff development days. Aside from that, the staff attends workshops sponsored by the National Black Child Development Institute, the National Association of Youth and Childcare Workers, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The writer's background and training is comprehensive and consists of a bachelor of science degree in elementary education and master of education degree in elementary administration and curriculum supervision. The writer has 10 years experience teaching in public and Catholic schools and 14 years of experience in the present position.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation that needed improving has broad educational significance. Motivating African American middle school age boys toward academic excellence is a crucial problem that if solved could provide a link needed in solving the juvenile delinquent problem in the Black community. The problem is that middle school age boys are, too often, nonchalant about achieving academic excellence. Excellence is more than high test scores on standardized tests (National Alliance of Black School Educators, 1984). It is being fully prepared as a functional, contributing member of society.

Though there is a large array of adolescent teaching materials and lessons suited for Euro-American middle class children, these commercially prepared materials have little cultural context, interest, and value to African American adolescent males. These males are going through an identity crisis just by the nature of adolescence. They are trying to find their niche in life. In order to compensate for the lack of practical, relevant, and interesting food for thought, as well as self-esteem building activities, these students become cognitively disengaged. They often see school as an undermining institution which constantly bores their spirit and assaults their ego. They see no connection

to what they are asked to learn and how it relates to practical life. The author felt that only through a fundamental restructure of the curriculum, methodology, and value system could we capture the high psychological and mental energy of this very important and valuable population.

Problem Documentation

The existence of this problem was documented by the observation of the teacher and the reports by the students. The standard grading scale is: A = excellent, B = good, C = fair, D = poor, and F = failing. The teacher observed that five of the six boys new to the school September, 1991 came with poor progress report card, i.e. mostly D's from their September, 1990 school year. It was noted also that four of the six boys did not turn in assignments on time in September, 1991, and five of the six boys did not pass weekly tests. A review of the teacher's evaluation reveals that there is a need to find ways to motivate African American middle school males toward academic excellence.

The reports by the middle school boys revealed that they were interested in physical energy (hands-on and whole body) activities. The boys felt that providing these type activities and Africentric lessons (lessons centered around the Black culture) would increase motivation toward practicing academic lessons. The boys were asked open-ended questions. No choices were suggested by the writer, and the

boys wrote answers individually on a sheet of paper. Six of the 13 boys picked high physical energy activities that consisted of all types of ball playing as favorite activities - basketball, football, kickball, and dodgeball (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

High Physical Africentric Activity Increases Black Male Academic Motivation

Respondents	Yes	No
Boys	9	4
Teacher	1	0

Table 2

Boys' Choices of Best Liked Activities

Art	Reading	Ball
4	3	6

Causal Analysis

There are several causes why black males are not motivated toward school. Commercially developed Eurocentric lessons and materials are culturally and historically biased, thereby serving no interest value to African American adolescent males. According to Hilliard(1988) much information depicting the European contributions to

civilization is blatantly false. Africentrism was the original worldview, while Eurocentric curriculum has only dominated world thought for approximately 500 years. This distorted manipulation of history and historical analysis was deliberately begun in the 1500's as a means to validate the African slave trade and sanction white supremacy. By erasing, what Hilliard calls, the collective memory of African achievement, African American students, especially males, are subliminally given a sense of worthlessness. Eurocentric curriculum places Europe as the foundation of civilization and centers all history around the impact Europeans had on people and places. Today, because so many plagiarisms have been brought to light, there is a new trend to co-op Eurocentrism with multiculturalism. The hoax, however, is that unless the fabricated core of Eurocentrism is dismantled and replaced with the historically correct Africentrism, the only thing that can be achieved is a pseudo-multiculturalism. Africentrism is the first step to true multiculturalism. Both written and visual curriculum materials from preschool through college, for all people of the earth, but especially the African American adolescent male, should be African centered.

Furthermore, the Eurocentric methodology negates the high energy level and interests of African American males, alienating them that much further. The Eurocentric methodology is more female centered, with activities females tend to enjoy, i.e. low intensity activities as reading,

discussing, and creative worksheets. African American adolescent males enjoy aggressive, high energy activities. Building things, relays, ball, and other whole body and hands-on activities should be provided.

Lastly, African American adolescent males no longer have a clear cultural rites of passage into adulthood as they did and still do on the African continent. Ancient African societies had a highly organized social structure that consisted of adult male role models in the community ingraining the minds of adolescent African males with motivation toward academic excellence as a requirement for attaining manhood. A sense of pride and self-esteem was associated with learning. Slavery in America and the demise of the black man by racist socio-economic and political tactics have left black adolescents in America deprived of a built-in system of support to bring them through the transition from childhood to adulthood. In its place varying, ambiguous, informal, societal messages have been substituted.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The writer's review of the literature revealed various relational concepts by leading authorities. Preliminary literature indicated that the fundamental structure of racism in this society oppresses and depresses African American male youth to the point that they give up (Chavis, 1991). Black adolescent males are more likely than white

counterparts to drop out of school, get into trouble with the law, have inadequate financial resources, and become teen fathers (Johnson, 1988). They are victims of urban violence and negative persuasions of all types. Often fatherlessly raised, there is no elder male role model or discipline structure (Kunjufu, 1985). The National Black Child Development Institute (1989) reported that 57.8% of Blacks in America live and struggle in urban areas against underfunded schools, poor living conditions, violence, drugs, and crime. Johnson (N.Y. Times, 1990) cited that fewer than 20% of Black adolescent males in Milwaukee hold a C average, and they comprise 50% of all suspensions in the city. This is why places like Milwaukee, New York City, and Detroit have tried to institute special elementary and middle schools tailored to the unmet needs of Black boys. Friere (1970) explained that when a people are oppressed they acquire helpless, depressing personality traits that are exhibited in various negative ways. Friere's strategy for raising a people's consciousness is to give initiative, purpose, and responsibility for overthrowing the yoke of oppression, and to show brightness of hope for the future. Froman and Owen (1991) showed that low self-efficacy leads to self harm behaviors. These adolescents do not mean to harm themselves. Moore and Rosenthal (1991) demonstrated that adolescents underestimate vulnerability to self destructive events. Because of the lack of worldly experiences adolescents tend to be unrealistically

optimistic about at risk behaviors.

Other research suggested that African American male adolescents' lack of interest in school was also attributed to the deletion of African history and culture from formal education materials and lessons (Hilliard, 1989). James (1989) explained that Greeks studied under the ancient Egyptians, who were Black African people. He further showed that the Greeks used the African knowledge, philosophy, and mystery system as their own creation. James documented the plagiarism and showed how ancient Africans brought civilization to Europe and other parts of the globe, as well. This was common knowledge until the capitalist/imperialist economic movement began in Europe. Only then was it important to conceal the facts from the world, especially the future generations of African people. Rationalizing slavery and colonialism made it important to rewrite history and develop a strong system of racism to defame the African race. Bandura (1977) stated that people need models to emulate and positive mirror images of themselves in order to be motivated to strive for success. One also needs to feel competent in order to develop self-efficacy. Still other literature revealed that the special male interests and high energy and activity level is not being taken into consideration when planning a curriculum that is intended to be successful with boys (Brandt, 1990). The kinesthetic approach would be highly effective for African American adolescent males. Pedagogy that would

allow for choice of activities and be related to the daily life of the African American adolescent would certainly spark more motivation than the redundant paperwork and nonexciting skills practice drills.

In summary, it has been well documented that the problem that exists for the writer's worksetting exists, in general, when educating African American children in the U.S. Attention needs to be paid to subliminal racism in our society. An accurate portrayal of African contributions, history, and culture needs to be written into every subject. Lastly, attention needs to be paid to "verve" (Hale, 1986) or high energy level that African American male children have. African American males need to be offered choices of high interest activities by which to learn the various academic subjects.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to motivate African American middle school males to strive for academic excellence evidenced in three ways. The boys were to show thirst for knowledge that the school offered by turning assignments in on time. The boys were to make the choice on a questionnaire that it was important to achieve the highest grades they were capable of achieving. Lastly, the boys were to pass weekly tests. The ultimate goal was to develop an appropriate, comprehensive curriculum for African American adolescent males and institutionalize an African adolescent rites of passage program for successful transformation from boyhood to knowledge seeking, productive, and responsible young men.

Performance Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Objective 1: At least 11 out of 13 middle school male students were expected to demonstrate thirst for the knowledge that the school offered. This objective was measured by the writer's recording of each student's completed weekly assignments for the eight months. Success was said to be achieved if at least 11 out of 13 students

completed weekly assignments on time at least five out of the eight months.

Objective 2: By responding to a questionnaire, at least 11 out of 13 middle school male students were expected to make the choice that, "It is very important to me to achieve the highest grade that I am capable of achieving." This objective was measured by responses on a questionnaire developed by this writer.

Objective 3: At least 11 out of 13 middle school male students were expected to pass weekly feedback tests for at least five of the eight months. This objective was measured by the record of passed tests kept by the teacher.

Measurement of Objectives

The measurement of the three objectives was done by the writer. The teacher assisted by using check-off sheets for objectives one and three. A student questionnaire for objective two was used. All three of these instruments were designed by the writer.

Objective one was measured by the use of the check-off sheet filled out at the end of each month (see Appendix A). The evaluation called for a quantitative analysis by the teacher about the completing of weekly assignments for each of the eight months of implementation. At the end of the eight month period the writer made a qualitative evaluation of the progress along the eight month spectrum. Success was defined by at least 11 out of 13 male students being

evaluated as completing weekly assignment sheets on time for at least five out of eight months.

Objective two was measured through the writer's qualitative analysis of the student responses to the questionnaire (see Appendix B). This questionnaire was given to the male students at the end of the eighth month. Success was defined by at least 11 out of 13 male students choosing that it was very important to achieve the highest grades they were capable of achieving.

Objective three was measured by the use of the check-off sheet filled out at the end of each month (see Appendix C). The evaluation called for a quantitative analysis by the teacher about the passing of tests. At the end of the eight month period, a qualitative analysis by the writer was made. Success was defined by at least 11 out of 13 male students being evaluated as passing weekly tests at least five out of eight months.

Chapter IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem for this practicum was that African American middle school age males are generally nonchalant about achieving academic excellence. There are several solutions suggested in the literature.

Brophy (1987) recommended motivating students by finding out what they like to do and arranging for them to do it. Brophy is a promoter of intrinsic incentives, allowing students to choose active learning tasks that they naturally enjoy. Allowing students to finish tasks that they start also is motivational because it instills within students a sense of accomplishment. Flexible scheduling without abrupt and rigid class changes would be promote motivation.

Both Hale (1986) and Wardle (1991) had theories that explained why African American males are unmotivated toward school. Hale discussed cultural differences in learning styles and suggested utilizing the natural ways African American males learn best. Hale described "verve" as the high psychological and physical energy level black youth have. This needs to be utilized and appreciated for maximal effectiveness in learning. Wardle focused on structuring academic activities for males around the aggressive male nature and high energy level. Wardle felt that boys are

shortchanged when the environment is not organized to permit male needs and interests.

McCarthy (1990) developed the theory of using the 4MAT system. McCarthy explained that the brain is divided into four modalities. Each part of the brain has a different way to receive and learn the world. Each modality asks and answers a particular question about the world. The first mode asks, "Why should I learn about this; of what relevance is it to me?" The second mode asks, "What is this all about? Fill me with information." The third mode asks, "How can I put this knowledge to practical application? Let me physically do something." The fourth mode asks, "What if another variable is added or deleted? What alternatives can I find?"

A child begins early establishing a preference and relying on one of the four modes of learning. When schools do not teach toward the student's chosen mode, it becomes difficult for the student to comprehend or be motivated to learn. Therefore, the writer chose to use all four modalities in each lesson.

Walker (1981) also was a proponent of learning style adjustments. Walker showed that the European axiology is man-object oriented, whereby the African is man-man oriented. The epistemology of Europeans is through cognition, whereby the African's is through symbols, representation, rhythms, and other affective domain experiences. Europeans lean toward technology, whereby

Africans rely on spirituality and human networks. Obviously, such differences have an impact on the educational system, which in turn has an impact on the interest and motivation of African American male students in the educational system.

Smilansky (1991) acknowledged that allowing more cooperative learning time for this age group motivates a desire for academic excellence. This is the age group where peer acceptance and comradery is the most important thing in a student's world.

James (1989) and Hilliard (1984) alluded to the fact that the entire curriculum should be revised. The curriculum should reflect the reality of the African contribution to world history. Hilliard advised educators to turn to the masters of education for guidance with educating African-American students today. Hilliard shared the fact that ancient Africans developed the first and most sophisticated educational system. Many famous ancient Greeks traveled to ancient African temples and universities for education. There was the University of Sankofa, The University of Timbuktu, the University of Ipet Isut, to name a few. Much of the teaching was a secret oral tradition given only after intensive study. The first step of intensive study was scribe school. Scribes received a general education by copying great works. There existed a holistic blend of theory and practice, a functional education consisting of mysteries and liberal arts.

Steele (1992) promoted "wise schooling". This is schooling that recognizes and illuminates the strength, abilities, interests, talents, and contributions of every individual student. Steele attributed the African American male student's not identifying with formal education to the subtle devaluation faced. Steele says school is the most persistent place in society where African American male students learn how little they are valued.

The writer believes that all of the solutions offered from the literature have considerable merit and can be implemented with the designated population in the writer's worksetting. The solutions assisted the writer in achieving the specific goals and objectives.

Description of Selected Solution

The literature provided a number of suggestions and recommendations to improve the motivation of African American adolescent males toward academic excellence. The writer incorporated a combination of these suggestions in this practicum.

1. The writer used "choice activities" of the students by which to learn.
2. The writer used "verve" or high psychological and physical energy levels and the aggressive nature of males through which to learn.
3. The writer used all four brain modalities in the teaching plans and lessons for the students. The use

of cooperative learning and peer tutoring was coupled with the Africentric curriculum. Lessons were generated to give African American male students accurate historical information about their role and their forefathers' role in developing civilization and academic excellence.

4. The writer used "wise schooling" to accent the value and beauty of each student.

5. The writer used the ancient African oral tradition. This was employed in the ancient African rites of passage for middle school age males in order to effectively instill African values, responsibility, and knowledge.

These solutions were under the umbrella of a rites of passage club for African American male adolescents. The writer feels that these solutions addressed both the problem and the causes of the problem, thereby were sufficient enough to achieve the stated objectives.

Report of Action Taken

There were four steps taken to achieve the goal. Step one entailed the writer's preparing Africentric academic lessons and materials that met the needs and interests of African American adolescent males. In step two the writer gave inservice staff development training to the middle school teacher as well as provided demonstration teaching around the Africentric lessons to be taught. The third and

most important step was the formulation and implementation of the rites of passage club with the boys. The final and culminating step was the analysis and preparation of the data collected. Tables were designed by the writer to display data and record the outcome of the practicum.

Preparing, implementing, and evaluating the practicum involved eight months. Each week the boys would make out weekly assignment sheets with the supervision of the teacher. They chose activities they enjoyed by which to learn information. These included aggressive, high energy level activities and interesting chalkboard games made up by the writer (see Appendix D). The boys collaborated with peers on academic tasks related to the African historical role in civilization. At the end of the week, it was recorded as to whether they completed assignment sheet on time and passed weekly tests.

Academic Africentric lessons and materials focused on a specific theme for the academic teachings during each month. The private, male, adolescent, African Rites of Passage Club was formed and called The Young Lions. Club meetings consisted of eight training sessions. The training session materials were developed by the writer. The middle school teacher was chosen and trained by the writer to be the male elder in charge of carrying the boys through the eight themes (see Appendix E). These themes were not incorporated in the regular school week lessons, but carried over in the private Rites of Passage Club training sessions

which were held as Saturday retreats each month (See Table 3).

Table 3

Rites Retreat Schedule

Month	Theme
One/Jan.	Family History and History of our People
Two/Feb.	Endurance and Bonding
Three/Mar.	Spirituality
Four/Apr.	Health Education
Five/May	Housekeeping and Finance
Six/June	Time Management/Organizational Skills
Seven/Jul.	Value Clarity and Future Plans
Eight/Aug.	Assertiveness and Leadership

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION

Results

The problem that existed in this writer's work setting was that African American middle school male students were nonchalant and unmotivated about achieving academic excellence. The problem existed because schools have been the most persistent place where interests, needs, and self-identity have been devalued and undermined. These males saw schools as lacking practical, relevant, and interesting application to their lives. They saw many of the things said and done to them as an assault upon their egos. The methodology of the schools, also, was opposite to aggressive, high male energy learning style.

The solution to the problem was to develop an interest based methodology, a practical, relevant, Africentric curriculum, and an Adolescent African Rites of Passage Club. The writer felt that incorporating activities like softball, basketball, dodgeball, football, and relays into the academic arena would provide motivation for learning the academic facts and concepts of reading, math, and spelling. The writer incorporated African history and culture into all of the academic areas. Lastly, a private male adolescent African Rites of Passage Club was formed.

The goal of this practicum was to motivate African American middle school males to strive for academic

excellence. Three objectives were designed to achieve this goal. The results related to each follows.

Objective 1: At least 11 out of 13 middle school male students demonstrated thirst for the knowledge that the school offers. This objective was measured by the record of students completing weekly assignment sheets for at least five of eight months.

All 13 students successfully demonstrated thirst for the knowledge that the school offers. At the end of each month, the writer used the check-off sheet to record who completed weekly assignments for the month. At the end of the eight month period, the writer made a qualitative evaluation of the progress. Table 4 provides an illustration of the results of the objective related to completed assignments.

Table 4

Qualitative Analysis of Completed Assignment Sheets

	Total Number of Students - 13		
Time	unsuccessful (less than 11)	somewhat (11)	very successful (12 - 13 boys)
4th month		X	
5th month		X	
6th month			X
7th month			X
8th month			X

Objective 2: At least 11 out of 13 middle school male students made the choice that, "It is very important to me to achieve the highest grade that I am capable of achieving." This objective was measured by responses on the questionnaire administered at the end of the eighth month.

Results for objective two indicate that all 15 students felt that it was very important to achieve the highest grade that they were capable of achieving. Before implementation of this practicum as a pretest and at the end of the eight month implementation period, the writer gave each student a questionnaire to mark how important it was to achieve the highest grade that they were capable of achieving. Table 5 summarizes these results.

Table 5

Qualitative Analysis of Motivation to Academic Excellence

	Total Number of Students - 13		
Time	Marked not important	Somewhat	Very imp.
1st month	3	3	7
8th month			13

Objective 3: At least 11 out of 13 middle school male students passed weekly academic feedback tests. This objective was measured by the record of passed weekly academic feedback tests for at least five of the eight months.

A review of the record revealed that all 13 students passed weekly academic feedback tests for at least five of the eight months. At the end of each month, the writer used the check-off sheet to record who passed the weekly tests for the month. At the end of the eight month period, the writer made a qualitative evaluation of the progress from the fourth through eighth month. Table 6 describes the results of this objective.

Table 6

Qualitative Analysis of Passed Tests

Total Number of Students - 13			
Time	Unsuccessful (less than 11)	Somewhat (11 boys)	Very Successful (12 - 13 boys)
4th month		X	
5th month		X	
6th month		X	
7th month		X	
8th month			X

Discussion

A review of the interpretation of the data indicates that all three of the objectives were achieved. The results confirmed the writer's expectations that Africentric, high energy, high interest activities could raise the African American male student's motivation toward academic excellence in school.

The idea of the project drew the attention of two outside sponsors who were looking for information related to, yet expanded from this practicum. A public school district offered the writer's school a Chapter 2 Grant to expand and document how to have an Effective School for African-American middle school students. This grant specified that we must plan for both males and females. The $10,000 grant enabled the school to take the children on many motivational fieldtrips and purchase extra motivational materials and supplies. The Fannie Mae Foundation offered the writer's school a $3000 grant to continue the Rites of Passage part of the project for the 1992-93 school year.

There has been interest raised by peers and other professionals also. The writer has been contacted by various Rites of Passage organizations around the city and across the country. A national confederation linkage is becoming glued.

A review of the literature revealed that others have met similar positive results in utilizing the solution strategies chosen by the writer. El Senzengakulu Zulu (Bond, 1991) implemented his own Africentric curriculum with successful results at Ujamaa Shule, an independent, Black, preschool through high school. Agyei Akoto (1990) saw tremendous gains by his implementation of a similar Africentric program at Watoto Shule, another independent, Black, preschool through high school.

Since the goals and objectives were met, several important implications are apparent. It is important that educators bridge the cultural dissonance between African-American middle school males and the traditional school curriculum. It is important that Africentric materials and lessons become readily accessible on the market. It is important that African American boys be taught and brought into manhood by African American men. It is important that African American male students be given high interest, high energy activities by which to learn (See Appendix E). This practicum also demonstrated that "back to basics" really stems back to the roots of ancient African pedagogy (See Table 7).

Table 7

African Foundations to Modern Learning Theories

Ancient African Foundations	Modern Learning Theories
Mystery System griot stories master teacher/priest	4 MAT System create a situation direct instruction
Scribal School	Drill and Practice
Kuumba/Creativity	Apply to new situation
Ptah-Hotep/whole person symbols call and response dance/drum/ceremony	Learning Styles visual auditory/verbal kinesthetic
Umoja/Ujima (unity/ collective work and responsibility)	Cooperative Learning
Rites of Passage/age-set	Developmentally Appropriate
Blend of theory and practice	Holistic Learning

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In light of the knowledge that was manifested by this practicum, an Africentric curriculum should be developed for all youth because it is the original foundation and certainly is the first and most important step to a truly multicultural curriculum. Based on the results obtained from the data relating to each objective, the writer concludes that African American middle school male students can be motivated to show enthusiasm for academic knowledge and strive for excellence in school. The writer believes that learning can be made fun, easy, and relevant to African American male students by using: a) the Africentric approach, b) high interest and high energy learning activities, c) a clear Rites of Passage into manhood sponsored by African American men.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that any replication of this practicum be implemented with the lessons plans and materials developed by this writer. These lessons and materials are synchronized into what the writer feels is a perfect match between theory and practice.

2. It is recommended that teachers who plan to implement the lessons be given in-service workshops on African contributions to civilization, language, and learning styles if they are not presently in an Africentric setting.

3. It is recommended that the activities in this practicum be expanded beyond the eight Rites of Passage training retreats to include 10 training retreats. It should go beyond the emphasis on African American males to include African American females. It should incorporate the high energy, high interest learning activities for males of all races.

Dissemination

The writer plans to share the practicum results with other schools and organizations that work with African American adolescent males. The writer will do this by submitting papers based on the practicum results to professional journals such as Fundisha Teach, Research Notes on Education, The Black Child Advocate, Youth Policy, and Journal of Black Studies. The writer will publish a book to serve as a manual for a national independent Rites of Passage. Lastly, the writer will offer workshops to other schools and organizations that are looking for ways to motivate African American male students toward excellence in school.

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APPENDIX A
RECORD OF COMPLETED ASSIGNMENTS

Record of Completed Assignments

Check each student who completes assignment sheets on time for each of the eight months.

Student Number	Months							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								

APPENDIX B

COMPILED ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION TOWARD ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Compiled Analysis Of Motivation Toward Academic Excellence

Check the appropriate category for each student upon asking about how important it is to achieve the highest grades capable of achieving.

Student Number	Not important	Somewhat	Very
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

APPENDIX C

RECORD OF TESTS PASSED BY STUDENTS

Record of Tests Passed By Students

Check each student who passes weekly tests the entire month.

Student Number	Months							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								

APPENDIX D

HIGH ENERGY & INTEREST LEARNING GAMES

Math Basketball

This game is played just like regular basketball except with a few alterations. Every basket made can only have its score counted if the shooter can correctly do a specific math problem. Record is kept of who makes baskets and how many. At the end of each quarter the basket makers are given predetermined questions to answer. Team members can collaborate before answering. The questions can come from the math textbook, teacher made tests or quizzes, or student made questions written on cards previous to the game. This game can be played with any academic discipline: reading, spelling, Black history, etc.

Reading Football

This game is played like regular football except for a few alterations. Since everyone wants to be the quarterback, in order to be quarterback, the player must be able to read the most pages or words without mistakes. If a team wants a certain player to be their quarterback, they must help him to learn to read a certain number of words or pages with no mistakes. Once the game is started, the plays called are the main words within the selection read or the most difficult words within the word list read. This game provides the fun and encouragement to increase learning in other disciplines also: spelling, math, foreign language, social studies, science, etc.

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Spelling Dodge Ball

All of the boys are in the middle except the two boys stationed on the opposite ends that will be throwing the ball. When a boy in the middle fails to successfully dodge the ball and is hit, he may keep his place in the middle and continue to play if he can correctly spell a word from the predetermined list of spelling words. If he cannot spell it, he goes to one or the other end where he joins the throwers. The last one left in the middle dodging balls is the first place winner.

Academic Softball

This is played like regular softball except before a run can count the boy has to answer an academic question when he reaches home plate. The predetermined questions can come from cards written by the boys, teacher made tests and qui, or school text and workbooks. Any discipline area is applicable to academic softball. Depending on the type of question and the circumstances, the teacher may or may not allow teammates to collaborate on answers.

Slide

This is an African American hand clap game usually played by girls who recited numbers in sequential order through 10. This game can be adapted to spelling or math easily. The hand actions to this game cannot easily be put

into words. A demonstration is necessary. The words, however, if the spelling word "ostrich" were used would be: Slide - o-o-o-o - os-os-os-os - ost-ost-ost-ost - ostr-ostr-ostr-ostr - ostri-ostri-ostri-ostri - ostric-ostric-ostric-ostric - ostrich-ostrich-ostrich-ostrich

The repetition in this fun and challenging hand clap game is a tremendous aid in memorizing of academic facts.

Build A Being

This is one of a series of chalkboard games. It was adapted from the traditional "Hangman". Since the concept of a man being hanged is very offensive to African Americans, who suffered such evils during slavery and the reconstruction era, the writer renamed and reconceptualized the game. A word centered around a theme (reading, math, social studies, science, spelling, etc.) is thought of by one boy in charge and whispered to a student helper. The rest of the class is to guess the letters in the word and ultimately the word itself. Blank lines are drawn on the board to let the class know how many letters are in the mystery word. With each correct guess of a letter or word by a class member, that letter or word is written in the blanks. The boy who first guesses the word wins and gets a turn to be in charge thinking of a new word. With every incorrectly guessed letter the boy in charge draws on the chalkboard a part of a human being, starting with the head,

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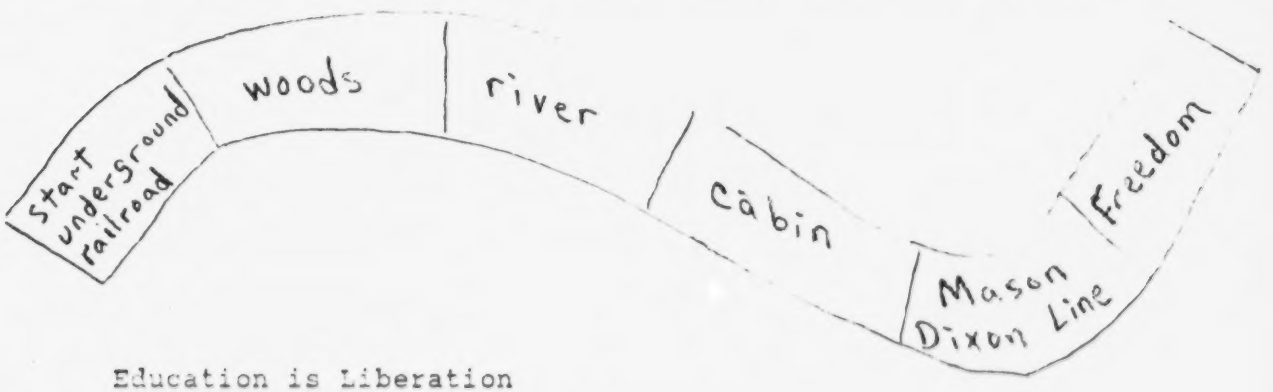
until the whole being is drawn. If the whole being is drawn before the correct word is guessed, then the student in charge gets to take another turn.

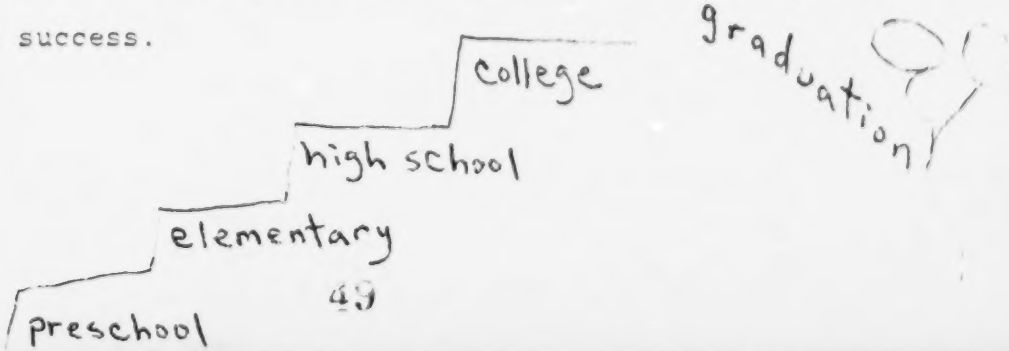
Slavery to Freedom

This game is played by drawing a path on the board as shown below. Each student initials the start box. As the student correctly answers academic questions, he moves up the path to freedom. One by one each student arrives in freedom - 1st, 2nd, 3rd place, etc. There are variation of the game: Ice Cream Store, Movie House, Toys Are Us, etc.



Education is Liberation

This chalkboard game is played by drawing stairs on the board. Each boy initials under the preschool step. As the boy correctly answers academic questions, he moves up the stairs toward graduation. This can be played with each stair representing a grade level or even the top step being career success.



Winner

In this chalkboard game each boy's name is written under the title name. As each boy correctly answers a question he writes a letter in the next box until he has spelled the word "winner" next to his name.

NAME	W	I	N	N	E	R

APPENDIX E

RITES OF PASSAGE LESSONS

Family History and History of Our People

Saturday, JAN._____ **9AM - 6PM**

Instructor/s _____

Objective: To enhance knowledge about the Black family through the history of our people from ancient African times to the present times with emphasis on the initiate's own immediate family and lineage

Materials Needed: _____

_____

_____

9:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Recite the African and CIBI Pledge; pour libation to honor the ancestors. Collect dues.
9:30 *(visual)*	Watch and discuss the Asa Hilliard "Free Your Mind" video or one of the following filmstrips: "Proud Heritage of Africa","We are Black", "Our Island Neighbors", or a related film, filmstrip, or video of your choice. Then discuss.
11:00 *(auditory verbal)*	If they have their family album, let them show and tell about "giants" in their family. Pass out worksheets to this study retreat. As a group, go over them by reading, discussing, analyzing, and doing the activities.
12:30 *(comradery)*	Eat packed lunch after premeal ritual.
1:00 (kinesthetic)	Field trip to the African Art Museum, Natural History Museum, Memorabilia of Black Collectibles, National Archives, or other related field trip of your choice.
3:00 *(kinesthetic)*	Arts and Crafts around the topic—example: —make a family album —make a family history book with recipes, photos, or stories —make a family collage —make a paper doll family (African or African American) —make cardboard pyramids
4:00 *(cooperative learning)*	Socio - dramatic simulation of what was learned today Break up in teams to create own dramatization. Play records about family (Its A Family Affair, Family Reunion, Better Days, We are Family, I'll Always Love My Mama, We've Been Together Forever and Ever)
4:45	Give Evaluation sheet from next page to each youth.
5:00	Hike to or drive to an eatery for dinner. (premeal ritual)
6:00	Parents pick up youth.

** Youths are to bring a three ring notebook and dividers to hold their worksheets for the year's retreats. They can cover them with African material the first retreat session during Arts and Crafts time.*

Endurance and Bonding

Saturday, FEB. _____ **9AM - 6PM**

Instructor/s_____

Objective: To fortify an understanding of the success that comes from physical and psychological endurance and fraternal bonding

Materials Needed: _____

_____

_____

9:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Recite the African and CIBI Pledge; pour libation to honor the ancestors. Collect book reports and dues.
9:30 *(kinesthetic)*	Leave for Madiera School, the all-day Inner Quest program in Virginia (703-478-1078), a program from 10am-4pm with obstacle courses and team tasks designed to fortify endurance, self confidence, and bonding with comrades.
	or
(Visual)	Watch and discuss filmstrip, "How to Turn Your Lemons Into Lemonade," or a film or video from your sources on the topic_____
	_____
11:00 *(auditory verbal)*	If not on field trip, pass out worksheets to this topic. Go over them by separate reading, discussing, analyzing, and doing the activities.
12:30 *(comradery)*	Eat packed lunches together after premeal ritual.
1:00 *(kinesthetic)*	Physical endurance and bonding exercises 1. a. sit ups or crunches b. jumping jacks c. leg raises d. 3 mile walk e. push ups 2. a. blindfolded - find your way around w/help of friends b. left in the woods - find your way back w/comrades (instructor is there but gives no help) c. solve the problem of how to get an object from a tall tree or how to get up a tall tree (group problem; each person must contribute physically to solving the problem)
4:30	Give evaluation sheet to each youth.
5:00	Hike or drive to an eatery for dinner; premeal ritual before eating.
6:00	Parents pick up youth.

Spirituality

Saturday, 10 P.M. - Sunday 5 P.M. MAR. _____

Instructor/s:_____ **Place** _____

Objective: To attain knowledge of how and why to seek spiritual food for strength

Materials Needed:_____

_____

_____

10:00 p.m. *(auditory verbal)*	Pour libation; recite CIBI and African Pledge. Collect book reports and dues.
10:30 p.m. *(cooperative learning)*	Read and discuss the following Spirituality Discussion sheets.
11:00 p.m.	Bedtime
6:30 a.m. *(kinesthetic)*	Rise and get ready for 8 a.m. Africentric service.
7:30 a.m.	Leave for Imani Temple (Africentric Catholic Church)
8:00 a.m.	Imani Temple Service
10:00 a.m.	Leave for Union Temple (Africentric Baptist Church). Stop at carry-out eatery en route.
10:30 a.m. *(visual)*	Union Temple Service
2:00 p.m. *(comradery)*	Return to home base. Stop at carry-out eatery en route.
2:30 p.m.	View film "Voices of the Gods" or video, "Race, Religion, and Culture".
4:00 p.m.	Arts and Crafts Paint rock of spirituality red, black, and green. Inscribe on it "God, JAH, ALLAH", etc., or make spiritual masks or spiritual cards with adinkra symbols and affirmations.
4:45 p.m.	Evaluation Sheets
5:00 p.m.	Parents pick up youth.

Health Education

Saturday, APRIL _____

Instructor/s _____

Objective: To impact knowledge on how and why to keep self healthy through proper nutrition, exercise, and rest; also, to give knowledge of the consequences of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, on health

Materials Needed: _____

_____

_____

9:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Recite CIBI and African Pledge; pour libation to honor the ancestors. Collect Book Reports and dues.
9:30 *(visual)*	See filmstrips or videos on nutrition, health, and hygiene. Discuss.
10:30 *(auditory verbal)*	Give worksheet packet to read, discuss, and do.
12:00 *(comradery)*	Eat packed lunches after premeal ritual.
12:30 *(kinesthetic)*	Field trip to doctor's office, hospital, or clinic
2:30 *(kinesthetic)*	Arts and crafts - using Ebony Magazines, teams of youth create posters on what they learned.
4:00 *(cooperative learning)*	Youth divide into teams and create a sociodramatic play/rap/chant about good health.
4:45	Youth fill out evaluation sheets.
5:00	Hike to dinner; premeal ritual before eating.
6:00	Parents pick-up kids.

Housekeeping and Finance

Saturday, MAY _____ **9AM - 6PM**

Instructor/s _____

Objective: To attain knowledge of household cleanliness, repairs, and financial matters

Materials Needed: Newspaper section of home rental copied for each youth
Checks, deposit slips

9:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Pour libation to honor the ancestors. Recite the CIBI and African Pledge. Collect book reports and dues.
9:30 *(coopertive learning)*	Have supplies ready. Discuss WHY AND HOW TO CLEAN A HOUSE AND CLOTHES on the next page. Then dramatize scenes. Later make up rhythmic hand and body games to the teachings. Play scrabbleman* around concepts learned. Make a picture book.
11:00	Have supplies ready. Discuss basic household repairs. 1) over run toilet 2) jammed garbage disposal 3) dripping faucet 4) Practice using screws, nuts, nails, pliers, hammers, screwdrivers, and wrenches. Dramatize scenes, practice repairing.
12:30 *(comradery)*	Eat bag lunch after reciting premeal ritual.
1:00 *(kinesthetic)*	Field trip to a Black owned bank. (open account, see vault, etc.)
3:00	Discuss and do hands-on enactment of financial matters (worksheets) Then use play money and play the jeopardy game around concepts learned.
4:45	Youth fill out evaluation forms.
5:00	Go to an eatery for dinner or order pizza to be delivered.
6:00	Parents pick up youth.

* *Like old hangman game, however, instead of a hanging, when a letter is missed a part of a man is built.*

Time Management/Organizational Skills

Saturday, JUNE_____ **9AM - 6PM**

Instructor/s _____

Objective: To attain knowledge and skill in managing time, understanding, and completing a task

Materials Needed: _____

_____

_____

9:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Pour libation to honor the ancestors. Recite the CIBI and African pledge. Collect book reports and dues.
9:30 *(visual)*	Read, discuss, and do worksheet on the importance of managing time daily.
10:30 *(cooperative learning)*	Watch and discuss filmstrip, "Time - Your Unnoticed Bank Account"
11:30 *(comradery)*	Have one-half of the group plan the day of a working adult. Have one-half plan the day of a school adolescent.
12:30 *(kinesthetic)*	Eat bag lunch after premeal ritual.
1:00	Field trip to a place related to this topic
4:30	Evaluation sheet
5:00	Dinner at an eatery or to be delivered
6:00	Parents pick up youth.

Value Clarity and Future Plans

Saturday, JULY _____ **9AM - 6 PM**

Instructor/s_____

Objective: To increase knowledge and understanding of self by examining and clarifying one's values as well as analyzing the importance of planning for the future

Materials Needed: _____

_____

9:00 *(auditory visual)*	Pour libation to honor the ancestors. Recite the African and CIBI Pledge. Collect book reports and dues.
9:30 *(visual)*	View Video, "RoboCop". Write Eurocentric values imparted. View Nguzo Saba films. Write Africentric views imparted. View video "They Live" and "Big". Discuss and complete worksheet.
11:00 *(auditory verbal)*	Discuss worksheets - "Values Survey" - write "Values - Sphere of Influence" - write "Mental Health" - discuss "Honor, Dignity, Respect" - discuss "3 Little Chicks" - dramatic "Respect Chart" - discuss "Adinkra Symbols" are geometric patterns created by the ancient Ashanti people of Ghana. These patterns symbolize special meanings in our lives - discuss. "African Proverbs" - discuss
12:30 *(comradery)*	Eat packed lunch after premeal ritual.
1:00 *(kinesthetic)*	Field trip around future career planning.
3:30 *(kinesthetic)*	Develop career folders. Cut out careers of choice from newspaper employment section. Make attractive arts and crafts display. If cannot find a career in newspaper, create own attractive ad.
	Fill out career profile sheets and discuss.
4:45	Evaluation Sheet
5:00	Dinner at eatery or call in pizza; premeal ritual before eating.
6:00	Parent picks-up youth.

Assertiveness and Leadership

Friday AUG_____ **6 p.m. - Sat 4 p.m.**

Instructor/s _____

Objective: To attain knowledge of how to be in control of one's own life and how to influence and gain the respect of others

Materials Needed: Chicken franks & buns, relish, mustard, catsup, canned juice, salad dressing, fruit, potato chips, cold cereal, paper plates & bowls, plastic forks & spoons, serving & cooking spoons & forks, trash bags, Lika, salad

6 p.m. *(auditory verbal)*	Pour Libation. Recite African and CIBI Pledge. Collect Book Reports and dues.
6:30	Board vehicles for field trip to overnight camping site, Prince William Forest Park, P.O. Box 209, Triangle, VA 22172.
8:00	Assign bunks and give camp rules.
8:30 *(kinesthetic comradery)*	Blindfold and lead to bonfire (symbolic hike through adolescence into adulthood w/leadership of Black elders). Worksheets to read and discuss and role play, "Adolescent Assertiveness," "Leadership Begins With Self-Esteem." Songs & games
10:00	Simulate underground railroad. Hold hands to find way back. Assertiveness and leadership hike back to camp - Youth leadership and bonding with each other by holding hands to find their way back. Then bedtime.
8:00 a.m.	Wake up, wash up, and have breakfast. (premeal ritual)
9:00	Obstacle course hike (analogies of 10 training disciplines) by ranger.
Noon *(comradery)*	Lunch cook-out; premeal ritual before eating
1:00 p.m. *(visual)*	Filmstrips: "How Life," "How-Lemonade," "Finding Success." Discuss.
2:30	Evaluation Sheet. Pack up and clean up.
3:00	Check out and return to Roots where parents pick up youth.